# THE GOSPEL not Oppoſed, BUT by the Devil AND Mens Lusts.

A Lecture SERMON Preach'd at *Boſton*, *Jan.* 8. 1718, 19. From MAT. X. 34.

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Acts xiii. 45. *When the Jews ſaw the Multitudes, they were filled with envy, and ſpake againſt thoſe things which were ſpoken by Paul, contradicting and blaſpheming.*

1 Theſ. ii. 16. *Forbidding us to ſpeak to the Gentiles, that they might be ſaved, to fill up their ſins alway.*

2 Tim. iii. 8, 9. *As Jannes and Jambres withſtood Moſes, ſo do theſe alſo reſiſt the truth: Men of corrupt Minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they ſhall proceed no further; for their folly ſhall be manifeſt to all men, as theirs alſo was.*

*BOSTON, N. E.* Printed by *B. Green*, for *Benj. Eliot*, at his Shop. 1719.

BRITISH MUSEUM

# THE *Gospel not Opposed,* BUT BY THE *Devil & Mens Lusts.*

MATTHEW X. 34.

*Think not that I am come to send Peace on Earth: I came not to send Peace, but a Sword.*

THESE Words were spoken by our Holy Redeemer Christ Jesus, to His *Twelve Apostles*; whom He had been Commissioning to Preach the Gospel. *ver.* 5. —— 7. He told them beforehand, that they should meet with great Difficulties, Dangers and Sufferings from the wicked World. *ver.* 16, 17, 22. *I send you forth as Sheep in the midst of Wolves* —— *Beware of Men, for they will deliver you up to the Councils, and they will scourge*

*scourge you in their Synagogues*——*And ye shall be hated of all men for my Names sake.* Thus our Lord *forewarned* His *Ministers*, of the dangers and abuses they were like to meet with from Men. To Encourage them therefore, He bids them *not fear* Men, who could do no more than *kill the Body*; but *fear God*, who could *destroy both Soul and Body in Hell*, *ver.* 28. And He further tells them, *the very hairs of their Head are all numbered*, *ver.* 30. Which intimates, the gracious care of Divine Providence concern'd for them. And further to animate them to a steady, couragious, perseverance in their work; He declares, that those who *confess Him before Men, He'll confess before His Father in Heaven*; and those who *deny Him before Men, He'll deny also before His Father which is in Heaven*, *ver.* 32, 33. Then follows our Text, wherein He says to them, *Think ye not that I am come*, &c. The *Jews* were ready to think, that their *Messiah* would be a *Temporal Prince or Monarch*, procuring *Worldly Peace, Honour, Wealth, Prosperity, to their Nation*; making them victorious over all their worldly or humane enemies. It's thought the *Disciples* themselves had some tincture of this opinion, when they said to Christ after His Resurrection. Act. 1. 6. *Wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?* But *Christ's Kingdom is not of this World.* (Joh. 18. 36.) 'Tis not of a Worldly nature, nor chiefly

upheld by Rewards and Punishments of a Worldly Nature. Christ plainly Intimates in our Text, that His Disciples and Followers must not think to enjoy uninterrupted outward peace, quiet, tranquility and prosperity; no indeed, the Preaching of His Gospel would sometimes have events quite contrary to these things. The *Preaching of the Gospel*, if rightly entertained and submitted to, tends to promote mutual Peace and Good Will among Men; but meeting with great opposition from Satan and Men's Lusts; it's often an Innocent occasion of quarrels, divisions, contentions among Men. In the place parallel to our Text, our Saviour said, *Luk.* 12. 51, — 53. *Suppose ye, that I am come to give Peace on Earth? I tell you nay, but rather Division. For from henceforth there shall be Five in one House, divided three against two, and two against three. The Father shall be divided against the Son, and the Son against the Father: The Mother against the Daughter, and the Daughter against the Mother: The Mother-in law against the Daughter-in-law, and the Daughter-in-law against the Mother-in-law.* So, Mat. 10, 36. *A Man's Foes, shall be those of his own House.* ver. 21. *The Brother shall deliver up the Brother to Death, and the Father the Child: and the Children shall rise up against their Parents, and cause them to be put to death.* Such things as these, are sometimes the fruits of the Malice and En-

mity of Satan, and Mens wicked Hearts, against the glorious Gospel of CHRIST, and those who heartily Imbrace it,

From the Words we may observe this

## DOCTRINE.

*The Preaching the Glorious Gospel of Christ, even the Gospel of Salvation; is sometimes a blameless Occasion (tho' never a faulty cause) of Woful Contentions, Divisions and Quarrels among Men.*

But how can this be? Christ is the *Prince of Peace*, Isai. 9. 6. When Christ was born, the Song of Angels was, Luk. 2. 14. *Glory to God in the Highest, on earth peace, good will towards men.* Christ has Purchased *Peace* and *Reconciliation* for Sinners, with God. *Rom.* 5. 1, 10. He makes *peace between men and men*, even *Jews* and *Gentiles*, Eph. 2. 14, 15. The Gospel of Christ, is called the *Gospel of Peace*, Rom. 10. 15. Since these things are so, we may Inquire,

Quest. *How comes it, that Preaching the Glorious Gospel of Christ, of Peace, of Reconciliation and Salvation; does sometimes become an Occasion of woful Divisions, Quarrels, Contentions among Men?*

Answ.

*Answ.* I might here say in general, the same cause sometimes hath different effects, according to the different objects it is concerned with. The fire softens some things, and hardens others. Tho' the *Light is sweet, and it's a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the Sun* (Eccl. 11. 7.) Yet to *weak and sore eyes*, the Sun's light may be offensive and afflictive. So, tho' the *Preaching of the Gospel*, is to some the *Power of God and the Wisdom of God*; yet to others it is *Foolishness*, and a *Stumbling block*, 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24.

But to the Question propos'd, I answer,

1. *Negatively*, Preaching the Gospel has no direct, proper tendency, to procure Sinful Quarrels, Contentions, Divisions among Men; neither are these things the proper genuine fruits of Preaching the Gospel. No Indeed, this is evident, because the Indulging these things is quite contrary to what the Gospel inculcates and requires. Here we may briefly consider,

1. *The Gospel forbids Sinful Contentions, Quarrels, Malice and Revenge.* Rom. 12. 19. *Dearly beloved, avenge not your selves.* Prov. 17. 14. *Leave of contention before it be meddled with.* Eph. 4. 31. *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.* Phil. 2. 3. *Let nothing be done thro strife or vain glory*

2. *The Gospel condemns and threatens a Contentious, Quarrelsom, Spiteful temper and behaviour. Maliciousness, Envy, Murder, Debate, Malignity, Despitefulness, Implacableness,* are reckoned among the *blackest crimes* of the very *Heathen,* who knew such things were *worthy of Death.* Rom. 1. 29, —32. So, *Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Envyings, Murders,* are mentioned as *manifest works of the Flesh*; and the Apostle declares, that those who do such things *shall not Inherit the Kingdom of God,* Gal. 5. 20, 21. *If ye forgive not Men their Trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your Trespasses,* Mat. 6. 15 *Whosoever hateth his Brother is a Murderer, and ye know that no Murderer hath Eternal Life abiding in him,* 1 Joh. 3. 15.

3. *The Gospel requires Men to be kind, loving, peaceable, useful to one another, and to be of a forgiving Spirit.* Rom. 13. 9, 10. *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his Neighbour; therefore Love is the fulfilling of the Law.* Heb. 12. 14 *Follow Peace with all Men.* Rom. 12. 18. *If it be possible as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all Men.* Eph. 4. 32. *Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you,* 1 Thes. 4. 11. *Study to be quiet.* Gal. 6. 10. *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good to all Men.* Luk. 6. 31. *As ye would that Men should do to you, do ye to them like-*

*wise*, 1 Cor. 10. 24. *Let no Man seek his own, but every Man another's Wealth.* That is, every one should seek to promote his Neighbour's welfare, as well as his own. So the Gospel requires us to *Sympathize* with others in their various conditions; *Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep*, Rom. 12. 15. *Remember them that are in bonds, as being bound with them*, Heb. 13. 3. The Gospel requires us, to *pray* for one another, (Jam. 5. 16.) to pray *for all Men*, (1 Tim. 2. 1.) yea for those that are *Injurious* to us, Mat. 5. 44. *Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.* Rom. 12. 21. *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.* 1 Pet. 3. 8, 9. *Having Compassion one of another, Love as Brethren, be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering evil for evil, not railing for railing, but contrary wise, blessing.*

The Gospel also plainly requires such a performance of *Relative Duties*, between *Husbands and Wives*, *Parents and Children*, *Masters and Servants* (Col. 3. latter end.) as would render *Families*, *Peaceable Societies*; and such *Relatives*, great blessings and comforts to one another. And as the Gospel plainly commands and requires mutual Love, peaceableness, kindness, usefulness among Men. So,

4. *In*

4. *It Commends and Encourages these things, and speaks of them as Marks and Signs of Sincere Christianity.* Mat. 5. 9. *Blessed are the Peace-Makers, for they shall be called the Children of God.* Mat. 6. 14. *If ye forgive Men their Trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you.* Our Lord Jesus said, Joh. 13. 35. *By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have love one to another.* The Apostle says, *We know that we have passed from Death to Life, because we love the Brethren—— Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him,* 1 Joh. 3. 14 & 5. 1.

These things thus briefly hinted (though plainly to the same purpose, much more might easily have been said) evidently show, that the *Doctrine and Precepts of the Gospel,* have no direct proper tendency at all, to promote Sinful contentions, quarrels, divisions among Men; but indeed the quite contrary. They have the most plain direct tendency that possibly can be, to promote the truest, greatest mutual love, kindness, usefulness, serviceableness among Men. Were the Gospel heartily believed, imbraced, obey'd by *all Persons* in any *Town, Country, Kingdom* on Earth; there would be among them the greatest mutual love, kindness, good Neighbourhood, usefulness that could be. If all Persons in any place, would heartily believe and obey the Gospel of Christ,

this would have the most direct, natural (as well as moral) tendency that could be, to promote even their outward Peace, quiet, comfort, prosperity in this World (unless they should meet with *Persecution* from others) as well as their *endless happiness* in the next.

Well, how comes it then, that preaching the Gospel is sometimes an occasion (tho' faultless and blameless) of quarrels, divisions, contentions among Men? Why the next Answer shall be.

2. *Affirmative*, It proceeds from the *Opposition that is made to the Gospel, by Satan and the Lusts of Men.*

1. *By Satan.* The Devil is the first Rebel and Traytor against God; he is the wicked one, the enemy of God and Men. By his subtilty, lying and malice, he drew *Mankind* also into *Rebellion* against God; he is therefore called the *Father of lies*, and a *Murderer from the beginning*, Joh. 8. 44. He is an *Adversary*, as a *roaring Lion* he seeks to *devour* Men, 1 Pet. 5. 8. He is an *enemy of all Righteousness*, (Acts 13. 10.) of every thing that's agreeable to God's preceptive Will. He's *the Tempter*, emphatically so, (Mat. 4. 3.) Do's all he can to draw Men into Sin, to the dishonouring of God, and ruining their own Souls. *He that committeth Sin is of the Devil, for the Devil Sinneth from the beginning*, 1 Joh. 3. 8. Unregenrate

graceless

graceless Persons are the *Devils Children*; when they *Sin*, they *do the Lusts of their Father the Devil*, Joh. 8. 44. *He works in the Children of Disobedience*, (Eph. 2. 2.) *They are in his Snare, and he takes them Captive at his will*, 2 Tim. 2. 26. Satan does what he can to blind and deceive Men, to make them Sinful and Miserable for ever. Well, but Christ came to *destroy the works of the Devil*, (1 Joh. 3. 8.) *To save His People from their Sins*, (Mat. 1. 21.) To redeem them *from all Iniquity, and to make them a peculiar People, zealous of good works*, Tit. 2. 14. Christ's Kingdom is as contrary to the Devil's, as *light* is to *darkness*; and they are opposed to one another under these names. The Gospel has a proper tendency, to *turn Men from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God*, Acts 26. 18. The Gospel of Christ is the *Gospel of Salvation*, (Eph. 1. 13.) Because it has a proper direct tendency, to bring Men to eternal Salvation thro' Christ. Therefore when the Gospel is faithfully Preached, when Persons are told plainly of their Sin and Misery, of the absolute necessity of *Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ*, (Acts 20. 21.) Plainly told, that all who believe and obey Christ shall be saved, and all the rest damned eternally in Hell Flames; I say, this faithful Preaching directly tends to *overthrow Satan's Kingdom*. Nothing is more cutting, grating, enraging to the Devil, than

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to have the Gospel faithfully Preached to Men. This shakes the Devils Kingdom, he's afraid he shall lose his Prey, that his Slaves and Captives shall be rescu'd from him. He's the *Strong Man armed*, while he can keep Sinners in Ignorance, carnal Security, Blindness, Wickedness, without those Inlightenings and Awakenings which would make Men seek Salvation; I say, while it's thus, *his Goods are in peace*, Luk. 11. 21. But when the Gospel is faithfully Preach'd, to Inlighten and Awaken Men, and Move them to flee from the Wrath to come; this does Inrage Satan, and makes him give all the Opposition and Discouragement he can to the Gospel. If particular Persons have Convictions, and some Serious concern about the safety of their Souls; Oh what Clouds, Darkness, Doubts, Objections does Satan raise in their Minds, to hinder them from heartily believing and obeying the Gospel? The Devil also stirs up Wicked Men, to oppose, revile, abuse the faithful Preachers, Favourers, Incouragers of the Gospel. When the *Sorcerer* oppos'd the Gospel, would have *turn'd away the Deputy from the faith*, the Apostle *Paul filled with the Holy Ghost*, call'd him a *Child of the Devil* for so doing, Act. 13. 8.—10. He did the work of his *Father the Devil*, in thus opposing the Gospel; the *Holy Ghost* (by the Apostle's Mouth) call'd him a *Child of the Devil* for it: the Devil has many such Children now in the World.

It's said, Rev. 2. 10. *The Devil shall cast some of you into Prison.* What, did the Devil write the *Mittimus*, or was he an Officer to Imprison the followers of the Lamb? No, but he stirr'd up wicked men to Imprison the Saints of the Most High. *Abel* was a Sincere Worshipper of the true God, and evidently accepted as such, his Brother *Cain* slew him, and how so? Why the Devil put him upon it. *Cain was of that wicked one, and slew his Brother; and wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his Brother's righteous*, 1 Joh. 3. 12. The Devil stirr'd him up, to Persecute and Murder his Brother for righteousness sake. Satan mov'd *Judas to betray Christ* (Luk. 22. 3, 4.) and he moves many to oppose and abuse Christians. If Satan can prevail with the wicked, to *Keep out*, or *Drive out* the Gospel from any Place or People, he will do it. If Satan can prevail with the wicked, to Persecute and Abuse Preachers and Favourers of the Gospel; he will do it. If he can't *prevent* the Gospel, he'll do what he can to *pervert* it; or to keep Men from Understanding and Obeying it. *He blinds the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them*, 2 Cor. 4. 4. Sometimes Satan stirs up *false Teachers and Preachers*, to oppose the *true Ministers of God.* There was *One* true Prophet at *Samaria*, even *Micajah* who faithfully declared

clared Gods Mind; but there were about *Four hundred false Prophets*, in whom *Satan was a lying Spirit*, by whose Influence they *Prophesied falsely*; yet they pretended, *the Lord sent them*, and that they were guided by *His Spirit*; these in their Prophesies, were all contrary to that One true Prophet, 1 *King.* 22. *ch.* One of these *false Prophets*, *Zedekiah* by Name, was very positive in declaring his *Lies* and *Delusions*; he made *horns of Iron*, and said to King *Ahab*, *Thus saith the Lord, with these shalt thou push the Syrians until thou have consumed them. And all the Prophets prophesied so, saying, go up to Ramoth Gilead, and prosper; for the Lord shall deliver it into the King's hand*, v. 11, 12. How full, absolute, positive were they in affirming, and that in *the Lords Name* (with their, *Thus saith the Lord*) that the Lord would prosper *Ahab* in his present Expedition against the *Syrians*? They pretended to be led by the *Spirit of God* in these things; for when *Micajah* declared their Prophesies to be false, *Zedekiah* smote him on the Cheek, saying, *Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me, to speak unto thee?* v. 24. How awful and doleful is it to consider, how these false Prophets were deceived! They pretended to the *Spirit of the Lord*, and yet it was a *lying Spirit* that was in their Mouths all this while, *v.* 22. With daring Impudence they spake falsely in Gods Name, they deceiv'd King *Ahab*, to his destruction (he

giving heed to their lies and delusions) they were under the Influence of the *Devil* that *lying Spirit* (Joh. 8. 44.) and yet blasphemously fathered their falsehoods, their false Prophesies on God, as tho' they had been the fruits of His *Holy Spirit*. This History, is a very awful Portion of Scripture to be Seriously thought of. It is to be fear'd there are many now in the World, who as Impudently affirm they are *led by the Spirit of God*, as these *false Prophets* did; and yet are really as much Influenc'd by a *lying Spirit*, as they were. It's no new thing, for *false Teachers* to oppose *true Ones*; and to speak *falsely in Gods Name*, pretending, he sends them, when 'tis no such thing. See *Jer.* 27. 15. and *ch.* 28. The Devil often stirs up *false Teachers*, to oppose the Gospel, and the faithful Preachers of it. Satan sometimes *transforms himself into an Angel of light*, (2 Cor. 11. 14.) to prevent the efficacy of the light of the Gospel. Indeed he makes the greatest opposition he possibly can, against the Gospel, and to prevent the good efficacy of it. He does all he can, to prevent the entertainment of the Gospel in the hearts of particular Persons, and in any *Countries, Towns, Cities* or *Societies* of Men. He does all he can to stir up *Divisions, Quarrels, Contentions* among Men; to hinder the Gospel and the good Efficacy of it. And as the Gospel meets with much *Opposition* from *Satan*, so it does,

2. *From the Lusts of Men.* Mens Lusts and Corruptions are contrary to GOD, to His Image and Law; the Gospel tends to destroy these Lusts and Corruptions, therefore it meets with Opposition from them. The hearts of fallen Men naturally, are *deceitful above all things and desperately wicked*, (Jer. 17. 9.) they're a meer sink of Sin, a fountain of Corruption, a nest of Abominations, from whence all their Actual Transgressions flow, *Mat.* 15. 19. Their *carnal minds are enmity against God, not subject to his law nor can be so*, Rom. 8. 7. They take pleasure in Unrighteousness, they're lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Now the Gospel requires Persons, to *deny themselves, take up their cross and follow Christ*; to *Repent* and turn from all their Transgressions, to *Believe in Christ*; to *crucifie the old man with it's Affections and Lusts*; to *cleanse themselves from all filthiness of Flesh & Spirit*; to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, godlily in this present world*, Tit. 2. 11, 12. *Ministers* should *Lift up their voice as a Trumpet*, should *cry aloud* and *not spare*; they should *shew to men their Transgressions and Sins*, (Isai. 58. 1. Should warn them of their Sin and Danger, *Ezek.* 33. 7. They should Preach *Damnation* to those who refuse to *Believe in Christ*, Mark 16. 16. Now when the Gospel is faithfully Preached, and Men warned to forsake their

evil ways; very often they can't bear it, they think these are *hard sayings*, they can't bear to part with their beloved Lusts and Corruptions. Joh. 3. 19, 20. *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. For every one that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.* It's an awful Symptom that Men *love darkness*, when they're unwilling to have the light of the Gospel shine upon them, and prevail in them. They don't love that light, that discovers and condemns their beloved Lusts. Mens *Lusts* are sometimes compar'd to a *Right Hand* and *Right Eye*; the Gospel requires the *Cutting off*, and *Plucking out*, and casting away these things. *Mat.* 5. 29, 30. And what, wont it provoke Men, to have their *Hands cut off*, and *Eyes Pluck'd out?* Doubtless it will; and Persons are often apt to be as much *Inraged against the Gospel*, which requires the subduing of their most beloved Lusts. Psal. 2. 1, 2, 3. *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The Kings of the earth set themselves, and the Rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed* (that is, *Christ*, Acts 4. 26.) *Saying, let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.* Here was consulting, plotting, contriving, inraging one another; and all this *against God and Christ*; to cast off His *Bands* and

Cords,

Cords, they would not be govern'd by His Laws, nor rul'd by His Precepts, no not they. Man's carnal heart, is full of enmity and rebellion against God and Christ, *Rom.* 8. 7. Mens Lusts often make 'em oppose the Gospel, and the faithful Preachers and Favourers of it; and make 'em cause *Divisions*, *Quarels* and *Contentions* to hinder the efficacy of it as much as they can. Jam. 4. 1. *From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?* *Wars* and *Fightings*, dont properly proceed from the *Gospel*; but from Mens *cursed Lusts* which are contrary to the Gospel. 2 Tim. 3. 8. *Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth, Men of corrupt minds*, &c. It is from the *corruptions of mens Minds*, that they *resist the truth*, even the precious Gospel of Christ. *Sin* in the heart, is compar'd to a *strong hold* (Fort, or Castle) 2 *Cor.* 10. 4. It stands upon it's *defence* against the Batteries of the Gospel, and makes all the Opposition it can against it. The *Lusts of Men*, make 'em oppose the Gospel, and cause *Divisions* and *Contentions* to the hindrance of it.

But more particularly, these *Oppositions* and consequent *Divisions* and *Contentions* often proceed,

1. *From Mens Ignorance, Prejudice, and blind Zeal.* Some *Doctrines* of the Gospel

are so deep and mysterious, that carnal Men are apt to look on them as *false* or *fabulous*. They're ready to say as *Nicodemus*, *Can a man be born when he is old? —— How can these things be?* Joh. 3. 4, 9. The Jews were *Ignorant of Gods Righteousness*, and so would *not submit to it*, Rom. 10. 3. They were for trusting in their own righteousness, could not be perswaded to trust in Christs Righteousness. *Paul* was reckon'd a *Babler*, a *Setter forth of strange gods*; because he *Preached Jesus*, and the *Resurrection from the dead*: he was *mock'd at* for thus Preaching, *Act.* 17. 18, 32. When he Preach'd about *Christ's Sufferings* and His *Resurrection*; *Festus* with a *loud voice* said, *Paul, Thou art beside thy self, much Learning doth make thee mad*, Acts 26. 23, 24. Thus the *Inspir'd Preacher*, is call'd a *Mad man*, by an *Ignorant Hearer*. So that from the Darkness and Ignorance of Men (Influenc'd by the *Spirit of Error*, 1 Joh. 4. 6.) they're apt to count the *great Doctrines of the Gospel*, *false*, *fabulous* or *ridiculous*. 1 Cor. 2. 11. *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* Ignorant, erronious Persons, the *Unlearned and Unstable* are apt to *wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction*, 2 Pet. 3. 16. And those *Ignorant of the Truth*, have often a *blind Zeal* against it. The carnal Jews had a *Zeal of God* (about matters of Religion)

*but not according to knowledge*, Rom. 10. 2. This *blind zeal*, often makes Men *violent opposers of the truth*, and *Persecutors* of the godly, especially *godly Ministers*. How *zealous* were the Ignorant, Superstitious *Priests*, *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, in opposing and *abusing our blessed Lord Jesus*? The Jews did *Ignorantly* (Acts 3. 15, 17. & 13. 27. 1 Cor. 2. 8.) and yet *Wickedly* (Acts 2. 23.) crucifie our Lord Jesus, and *kill the Prince of Life*. The Apostle says of the *Jews*, 1 Thes. 2. 15. *Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own Prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men.* Our Saviour said to His Disciples, Joh. 16. 2. *The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God service.* Oh woful, lamentable indeed, that Men should be fill'd with such *blind zeal*, as to think 'twould be a *Serving of God* to *Kill His precious Saints and Servants*! *Paul* before his Conversion, was such a blind Bigot and bloody Zealot; he confess'd afterwards. Acts 26. 9—11. *I verily thought with my self, that I ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem; and many of the Saints did I shut up in prison, having received Authority from the chief Priests, and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every Synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme, and being exceeding mad against them, I persecuted them even to strange cities.*

Here

Here was *blind zeal* to purpose, an Ignorant *Erronious Conscience* put him upon all this *Barbarous Murderous Wickedness*; he *verily thought* (twas the *perswasion* of his Mind, *blinded* by the *Devil*, 2 Cor. 4 4.) that he *ought* (not only *might*, but *ought*) to do these vile abominable things. Oh how *Humbly* and *Earnestly* should Men Pray, that GOD would deliver 'em from, or not leave 'em to, such an *Erronious Conscience*, such *Ignorant blind zeal*!

Again, *Oppositions*, *Quarrels*, *Contentions* often proceed,

2. *From Mens Covetousness*. *Covetousness is Idolatry*. Col. 3:5. *The love of Money, is the root of all evil*, 1 Tim. 6. 10. Now the Gospel requires Persons, to *Mortifie* their *Covetousness*, to set their *Affections on things above and not on things on the earth*. It is said, 1 Joh. 2. 15. *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*. Yea, the Gospel (or written word of God) requires Men to *Honour the Lord with their substance*, (Prov. 3. 9.) and to be at some *Cost* and *Charge* to *Maintain Gods Worship* and *Ministers*. Gal. 6. 6. *Let him that is taught in the Word, communicate to him that teacheth in all good things*. 1 Cor. 9. 14. *So hath the Lord ordained, that they who Preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel*. Those who with-

hold what's Just and Due on these accounts, re charg'd with *robbing of God*, and that y *God Himself*, too Mal. 3. 8, 9. Yea the Gospel requires, persons, to be *Kind and Charitable to the Poor and Indigent*. Rom. 12. 13. *Distributing to the necessity of the Saints, given to Hospitality*. 1 Tim. 6. 18. *Rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate*. So Heb. 13. 16. The Gospel also *forbids* stealing, *Cheating*, *Defrauding*, *Oppressing*, even all Unrighteous Methods of gain. Now these things are so *contrary to Mens Covetousness*, their Inordinate *love to the World*, that they can't endure them. Love to the World, makes many oppose the Gospel. How hotly will some plead and argue, against any *Support or Maintainance for Gods Ministers*, tho' the Scriptures plainly require it? They look on this as a *Burden* and *Grievance*, and set up their carnal arguings against the express Commands of God. Tho' God gives them their *Corn*, *Wine*, *Oil*, *Silver*, *Gold*, *Flax and Wooll*, (Hos. 2. 8, 9.) even *all they have*; yet they're unwilling to give a *small part* to *Support Gods Worship* and His *Ministers*. *Love of Money*, *makes some err from the faith*, (1 Tim. 6. 10.) and makes many oppose the Gospel. Possibly on this account, they'll call *Ministers of Christ*, *Wolves*, *Hirelings*, *Greedy of filthy Lucre*; revile 'em and call 'em all to naught (rather than cross their Lust of *Covetousness*. Nor can they bear to be ti'd up to the Gospel

rules

rules of Equity and Honesty; and forego their unjust Methods of Gain. At *Philippi*, there was a *Damsel possessed with a spirit of Divination* (a Devil) *which brought her Master much gain by soothsaying. Paul in Christs Name cast out the Devil.* This so *Inrag'd* her *Master*, when he saw the hope of his *Unlawful Gain* was gone, that he rais'd *Persecution* against *Paul* and *Silas* Ministers of the Gospel; they were *beaten*, had *many Stripes*, were put into *Prison* and *their feet fasten'd in the stocks*, Acts 16. 16——24. So when the Gospel prevail'd at *Ephesus*, *Demetrius a Silver smith which made shrines for Diana*, call'd others of the same Occupation together; and because they fear'd they should lose this Method of their *Unlawful Gain* by their *Idolatrous trifles*; they made a *great stir*, an *horrible uproar* against the *Gospel* and the Incouragers of it, *Acts* 19. 23——34. Secret Covetousness or *Love to the World*, occasion'd these *two horrible uproars and tumults*, tho' *other things* were mention'd & *pretended* as the cause of them. *Covetousness* makes Persons do much to *Oppose the Gospel*, tho' possibly they'll pretend other Matters which are not the real cause: but let their pretences be what they will, yet God knows their hearts, and He *wont be Mocked*, Gal. 6. 6, 7. The carnal Jews, could *lavish Gold out of the bag for their Idols*, (Isai. 46. 6.) tho' they *robb'd God in Tithes and Offerings*, Mal. 3. 8, 9. Some can be *Liberal* for their *False Worship*, or for their *Lusts* of

Pride,

*Pride, Intemperance* and the like; who grudge the sparing of any thing to promote Gods Worship and Glory. They are for glutting, and *fattening their Lusts*; and for *starving the Gospel.* Again, Oppositions, Divisions, Contentions often proceed,

3. *From Mens love to wicked Customs, and false Worship.* The *Idolatrous* Jews plainly told the Prophet *Jeremiah*, that they would not hearken to what he had spoken in the Name of the Lord; but would *burn Incense to the Queen of heaven*, as *they*, their *Fathers*, *Kings* and *Princes* had been wont to do, *Jer.* 44. 16, 17. They were so in love with, and wedded to, their *Wicked Customs* and *false Worship*; that they were resolv'd to go on and continue in them, tho' *directly contrary to the express word and message of the Great GOD* unto them. It was objected against *Paul* and *Silas*, those *Preachers of the Gospel.* Act. 16. 21. *They teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive.* When it was pretended at *Ephesus*, that by reason of the *Gospel* the goddess *Diana* was in danger of being *despised*; this stirr'd up the *wrath of the People*, and occasion'd an horrible tumult and uproar, *Act.* 19. 27, 28, 34. In these Instances, they pretended the *Usage & Customs* handed down from their Fathers unto them; they refus'd and rejected the *Gospel*, the *plain Message of God* to them; because 'twas con-

 trary

trary to what *they had been taught*, and the *way they were brought up in*. It's possible, that *Custom*, *Usage*, the *practice of Fore-fathers*, may sometimes be pleaded for *false Opinions and ways of worship*; as well as for *true Ones*. The *Woman of Samaria* could plead *Custom*, the Usage, the Religion of her Fore-fathers; *Our Fathers worshipped in this Mountain*. Yet our Saviour said to her, *Ye worship ye know not what*, Joh. 4. 20, 22. Some *receive a vain conversation, by tradition from their Fathers*, 1 Pet. 1. 18. If Persons have no more to say for their *Opinions*, or *Way of Worship*, than that they *receiv'd 'em from their Fathers*; it's but a weak and worthless argument indeed. May not *Mahometans* and *Heathenish Idolaters*, make this Plea? Yes Indeed. Yet this weak and groundless Plea, seems to be of great weight with some. Because the *Gospel* does oppose and condemn, some *Opinions* and *Ways of Religion* they have been brought up in; therefore they'll *Oppose the Gospel*, and make what stir they can against it. How unreasonable is this! The *Progenitors*, the *Fore-fathers* even of *Abraham* and the *Israelites* (as *Joshua* declares, ch. 24. 2.) *Served other gods*; but for all that, *Abraham* obey'd Gods call, believ'd His revealed will, and commanded his Children to do so too, (*Gen.* 18. 19.) tho' never so contrary to the false Opinions and Worship of his Fore-fathers. We find that those *godly Kings*, *Hezekiah*,

*Hezekiah*, *Josiah* (2 Chron. 29. 6. 2 King. 22. 13.) the godly *Jews* (Ezra 5. 12.) the *Levites* (Neh. 9. 16, 34.) the Prophet *Daniel* (Dan. 9. 8.) even all these *confessed the Sins of their Fathers*; and therefore did not think that meerly the *Practice of Forefathers* was a sufficient rule for them in Religion. It is not the *Opinions* or *Customs of Fore-fathers*, but the *Holy Scriptures*, the *Word of GOD*, that is to be the *Rule* and *Measure* to try whether this or that way be pleasing to God. Psal. 78. 7, 8. *That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments; and might not be as their Fathers, a stubborn and rebellious Generation.* 2 Chron. 30. 7, 8. *Be not like your Fathers, and like your Brethren, which trespassed against the Lord—— Be ye not stiff necked as your Fathers were, but yeild your selves unto the Lord, and enter into his Sanctuary.* 1 Thes. 5. 21. *Prove* (or try) *all things, hold fast that which is good.* But what must we *prove and try* Matters of Religion by? Why by the *Written Word of GOD.* Isai. 8. 20. *To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because they have no light in them.* Let Men pretend never so much to the *Light within*, to *Inspirations*, yet those Opinions or Doctrines which are contrary to Gods *Law*, *Testimony*, *Word*, they have *no light in them.* *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God; and is profitable for Doctrine,*

*Reproof, Correction,* &c. 2 Tim. 3. 16. 2 Pet. 1. 19—21. Since then the Scriptures are of *Divine Inspiration*, they're the best Rule we can have to try the *Doctrines* and *Practices* of Religion by. The *Bereans* were commended, for *Searching the Scriptures*, as the *Rule* by which to try the *Doctrines* that were *Preach'd*, Acts 17. 11. Since *all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God*, it must needs be horrid Impiety and Blasphemy in any, to teach things *contrary to the Scripture*, and yet pretend to be *led by the Spirit of God* in teaching so. Again, Oppositions, Divisions, Contentions often proceed,

4. *From Mens Pride and Self conceit.* They who oppos'd the Word and Message of GOD, sent by the holy Prophet *Jeremiah*, were the *Proud Men.* They plainly said to the Prophet, *Thou speakest falsely, the Lord our God hath not sent thee to say,* &c. Jer. 43. 1, 2. Note by the way,

*Proud* Men are apt to call that *false Doctrine*, which is *cross to their wicked Wills, Humours and Inclinations.*

Alas, *Pride* is very opposite to the Gospel, to the *Truths of God*, and to the *Peace and Quiet of Men.* Psal. 10. 2, 4. *The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor. The wicked thro' the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God, God is not in all his*

thoughts. If *Pride* and Self-conceit, keeps Men *from seeking after God*, and makes 'em say as Jer. 2. 31 —— *We are Lords, we will come on more unto thee*; No wonder then, if it makes 'em *Oppose* the *Truths* and *Precepts* of God. How much *Pride* is there in those words of the Wicked? Psal. 12. 4. *With our tongues will we prevail, our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?* Nay, if they reckon they may *Think, Speak, Do* as they list, without check or controul; and that *none is Lord over them*, to give law to them, or call them to an account; then no wonder if they break all bounds, and oppose the Truths and Messages of God Himself. Men whom *Pride compasseth about as a chain* —— *they set their mouth against the Heavens; and their tongue walketh thro' the earth*, Psal. 73. 6, 9. They'll speak against the Truths and Precepts of the *GOD of Heaven*, and against the *Peace* and *Quiet* of *Men on Earth*. Prov. 28. 25. *He that is of a proud heart, stirreth up strife.* Prov. 13 10. *Only by pride cometh contention.* When God sent a Prophet, to reprove King *Amaziah* for his *Idolatry*; the King proudly said to him. 2 Chron. 25. 16. *Art thou made of the Kings Council? Forbear, why shouldst thou be smitten?* As if he had said,

'Why how now, who sent for you, how 'come you here? Are you one of the 'Privy Council? Forbear your advice, don't

'come Preaching here, if you do you shall 'be smitten for it.

Oh the *Pride*, the *Self-conceit* which appear'd in this direct Opposition, to the Divine Message sent directly to him! But the *Prophet* repli'd to him, *I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened to my counsel.* And a while after, he was *Slain by Conspirators*, v. 27. Tho' he was a *King*, God took Vengeance on him for *proudly rejecting His Message.* There's *destruction determin'd by God*, against those who *proudly, obstinately* and *finally reject His Holy revealed Will.* The Apostle says, *He that consents not to the words of the Lord Jesus, and the doctrine according to Godliness*; *is* PROUD, *knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words*; *whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth*, &c. 1 Tim. 6. 3—5. Many Persons tho' *destitute of the truth, knowing nothing* or very little in Religion, are yet so *Proud*, so *Self-conceited*, that they *wont consent to the words of the Lord Jesus*, nor to that *Doctrine according to Godliness*; no not they. Instead of receiving and obeying the *plain truths and precepts of the Gospel*; they'll have their *Debates*, their *Jangles*, their *perverse Disputings* to maintain the Errors of their *Own corrupt Minds*; and to oppose the

the good Efficacy of the Gospel as much as they can. Some are for *vain Jangling, desiring to be Teachers of the Law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.* 1 Tim. 1. 6, 7. *Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.* Such as these yet proudly *resist the truth, creep in to houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,* 2 Tim. 3. 6, 7, 8. Some *will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts heap to themselves Teachers* (such Teachers as will gratifie and flatter their Lusts and Corruptions) *having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables,* 2 Tim. 4. 3, 4. Indeed, It's wonderful to consider, how little some Persons know, and yet how *Proud* and *Self-conceited* they are. Tho' they know very little, yet the Devil and their deceitful hearts so puff 'em up with *Pride,* that they think themselves able to *dispute*; it may be they fondly dream that they're fit to be *Teachers* and *Preachers*: Such Persons often do much to serve the Devil and oppose the Gospel. Such Persons often *Speak evil of things they understand not,* they *sport themselves with their own deceivings* (tho' they are *deceiv'd themselves* and do *deceive others,* yet they make a *Sport* of it, proudly glory in it) they *beguile unstable souls,* they *speak great swelling words of vanity.* Such *Proud* deceived and de-civil-e

deceiving Teachers, often *draw many into their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of,* 2 Pet. 2. 1, 2. 12, 13, 14, 18. The *way of Truth*, of Gods Truth, is often *evil spoken* by the *Proud* and *Ignorant*; so as to occasion *Divisions* and *Contentions*. Such Divisions and Contentions often proceed,

5. *From Mens Love to their Carnal Sensual Pleasures.* Their love to these, makes them *Oppose the Gospel* which *Condemns* such things. We read of some, *whose God is their belly, they glory in their shame, they mind earthly things*; but *their end is destruction*, Phil. 3. 19. Their *belly is their god*, it is their Religion as it were, they mind nothing so much as the gratifying of their Inordinate Sensual Appetites. They are *lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God*, (2 Tim. 3. 4.) the Gospel threatens *destruction* to such. Well, when Persons are given to *Drunkenness*, *Glottony*, *Fornications*, *Adulteries*, filthy, sensual unclean Practices; and the Gospel is faithfully Preach'd *Condemning* these things; this often *Inrages the wicked*, they can't bear to have their most beloved Lusts and Corruptions thus spoken against, thus plainly struck at. When King *Herod* had taken *Herodias* his Brother *Philip's* Wife; *John* the *Baptist* said to him, *It is not lawful for thee to have her.* Now *John* for thus *Preaching* and *Testifying*

gainst his *Incestuous Uncleanness*; was first *imprisoned*, and after a while *Beheaded*, Mat. 14. 3 —— 11. The wicked *Woman's Spite* and rage, prevail'd to have this holy faithful *Preacher's* head cut off, to have him *Murdered*: it was *Love to Sensual Lusts*, that occasion'd and produc'd this barbarous Murder. Oh how often does the love which *Men* and *Women* have, to their cursed Lusts, their Sinful Sensual Pleasures; make them oppose the Gospel, hate, revile and persecute the faithful Preachers and Promoters of it?

Thus we see, that the *Devil* and *Mens Lusts* Oppose the Gospel, Promote *Divisions*, *Quarrels*, *Contentions* on the account of it's being *Preached*. The Gospel has no direct tendency to promote such things, but quite the contrary, as we have shewed all ready.

We may now proceed to the USE or APPLICATION; and from what we have heard, we may Infer,

1. *The best things may possibly be much abus'd, and be an Innocent occasion of much evil.* The Preaching of the Gospel is sometimes so, Mens Lusts stir'd up by the Devil, thence take occasion to make horrible Divisions and Confusions. Tho' the *Scriptures* are able to make Men *Wise to Salvation*, thro'

*thro' faith in Christ Jesus*, (2 Tim. 3. 15.) Yet some *wrest them to their own destruction*, 2 Pet. 3. 16. Very often, the more Gods Precepts are urged on Men, so much the more their Ignorant wicked hearts rise up in rebellion against it. *The Commandment is, holy, and just and good*; yet says the Apostle, I *was alive* (in his own Ignorant thinking, while *Unconverted*) *without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived* (made lively, vigorous opposition) *and I died*, Rom. 7. 9, 12. The waters of a *Brook* or *River*, sometimes move *Smoothly and Quietly*; but if a *Damm* be made a cross, how do they *rise* and *swell*, and make *weighty Opposition* against what would hinder their course? It may be in such or such a Place, People were something *easy and quiet without the Gospel*; but when that comes to be Preach'd among them, Oh what a *Stir* and *Commotion* is there! How much *Clamour* and *Opposition*, *Reviling* and *Contending*? How so? What's the Matter? Why Satan's kingdom of darkness is disturb'd and indanger'd; and he stirs up carnal Persons in love with their Ignorance and Wickedness, to give all the Opposition and Discouragement they can. It may be *Drunkards*, *Fornicators*, *Adulterers*, *profane Swearers*, meer *Atheists* might come and live *Peaceably* and *Quietly*, in some dark Places destitute of the Gospel; but if a *Minister of Christ* come to live there,

and faithfully Preach the Everlasting Gospel of Salvation; then, Oh how much Clamour and Opposition is made against it! But those who had rather have the *Devils Children* (as *Drunkards, profane Swearers*, and such like are) than *Christ's faithful Ministers* among them; will have but a miserable account to give up at the last day.

2. *Great is the Ingratitude of Ignorant and Evil Men, in making Opposition to the Gospel.* GOD shows great Mercy in sending the Gospel of Salvation to any, it's an *Honour*, a *Favour* that He sends His *Ambassadors*, Ministers to them; *Praying them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God*, 2 Cor. 5. 20. But Men are often so *Foolish* and *Ungrateful*, as to *Despise* and *Oppose* the *Gospel*, and abuse the *Messengers of God* who bring it. Alas, Poor, Ignorant, Deluded Souls; they provoke GOD and hurt themselves in doing this. GOD says, Prov. 8. 36. *He that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me, love death.* If a private Neighbour should send a Servant on an Errand to you, would you not hear what he had to say? And when the Great GOD, the Maker and Judge of all Men, sends His Ambassadors with His Everlasting Gospel to any; shall they not hearken to the Message? In this case, *He that despiseth, despiseth not man but God*, 1 Thes. 4. 8.

*Man*

*Man* is the *Messenger*, but GOD is the *Sender*; therefore to despise the *Messenger* and *Message*, is to despise the *Sender* of them. When Christ sent forth His *Ministers*, He said to them Luke 10. 16. *He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despised me, despiseth him that sent me.* How Sinful and Dangerous then is it, to despise and reject Christ's Gospel and His Messengers? Hos. 4. 6. *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee.* How awful is the account we have of the Jews? 2 Chron. 36. 15, 16. *The Lord God of their Fathers sent to them by his Messengers, rising up betimes and sending: because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place. But they mocked the Messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his Prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.* GOD shew'd His *Compassion* in sending His *Message* and *Messengers* unto them; but when these were *Mock'd* and *Abus'd*, then there was *no Remedy*, then Divine *Wrath* overtook them. Nay *Eternal Wrath* in the other World, will be the portion of those who finally reject and disobey the Gospel of Christ. Our Lord said to His *Ministers*. Mat. 10. 14, 15. *Whosoever will not receive you, nor hear your words, when*

*ye depart out of the House or City, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment, than for that City.* Whoever therefore shall read this Book, in God's Name let them take heed, take warning, that they don't *oppose, reject or discourage* the *Gospel* or the *Ministers* of Christ, if they do, they must answer for it in the Judgment Day, however it goes with them now.

3. *Fallen Mens natural enmity against God and Christ, is stronger than their natural affections to one another, yea to nearest Relatives.* When *Brethren, Parents* and *Children*, will hate, oppose, malign and abuse one another; for the sake of their *Faith in Christ and love to Him*, (Matth. 10. 21. Luke 12. 51—53.) Whence is this, but from their *enmity against God* and *Christ*, (Rom. 8. 7. Joh. 15. 19.) even from their *heart wickedness*, Mat. 15. 19. *Cain* murdered his Brother *Abel* for his *righteousness*, 1 Joh. 3. 12. Those *born after the Flesh, sometimes Persecute them born after the Spirit*, (Gal. 4. 19.) tho' they are *natural Brethren*. This is one Instance of the depth and strength of Sin in the hearts of the unregenerate.

4. *No wonder if the faithful Ministers of Christ are often reviled, reproached and abused in the World.* Indeed they should be *highly esteemed* in *love, for their works sake*, 1 Thes. 5. 12, 13.

But since the Gospel is so oppos'd by *Satan* and *Mens Lusts*; no wonder if the faithful *Preachers* of it, are greatly abused also. Our Saviour said to His Disciples, Mat. 5. 11, 12. *Blessed are ye when Men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsly for my sake —— For so persecuted they the Prophets that were before you.* The holy *Prophets* of God had all manner of evil spoken of them, nothing too *bad*, too *base*, too *vile* to be spoken of *God's Messengers*, (thought the wicked) and that *falesly* too. They did not boggle at the *greatest lies*, the most *gross abominable slanders and falsehoods* to *defame* the precious Messengers of God. Psal. 35. 11. *False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my Charge things that I knew not.* Thus 'twas with the Prophet *Jeremiah*, a charge was once laid against him, to which his reply was, *Jer.* 37. 14. *It is false.* Jer. 18. 18. *Then said they, Come and let us devise devices against Jeremiah —— Come and let us smite him with the Tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words.* He said also, Jer. 20. 10. *I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side, report say they, and we will report it.* The holy *Apostles of Christ*, were *made a Spectacle* (or gazing stock) *to the World, Angels and Men, they were despis'd, revil'd, persecuted, defamed*; and reckon'd as the *filth of the world, and offscouring of all things*, 1 Cor 4. 9 —— 13. They met with *dishonour, evil report*, and were reckon'd *deceivers*, tho' they were really

really *true*, 2 Cor. 6. 8. The Apostle *Paul* was call'd a *Pestilent fellow*, a *mover of Sedition*, *profane*; and charg'd with *turning the world upside down*. They said of him, *Away with such a fellow from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live*, Act. 17. 6. and 22. 22. & 24. 5, 6. This vile, *abusive treatment* had that *holy Minister of Christ*, who even *travil'd in birth for the good of Souls*, and was *willing to spend and be spent* for their welfare. Nay our blessed Lord Jesus Himself (that *Teacher come from God*, that most blessed Divine Teacher) was call'd *a Man gluttonous, a wine bibber, a friend of Publicans and Sinners* (they revil'd and reproach'd Him, as tho' He had been *Intemperate*, and *given to bad Company*) Mat. 11. 19. Yea they call'd Him *Beelzebub* (that is, the *Prince of Devils*, Mat. 12. 24.) No wonder then if His *faithful Ministers* meet with something of the like Treatment; for the *Disciple is not above his Master, nor the Servant above his Lord*, Mat. 10. 24, 25. It's not much to be wondred at, if *Christ's faithful Ministers* are call'd *Wolves, Deceivers, Hirelings, greedy Dogs*, and all to nought: No wonder if the greatest lies are told of them, to defame and hurt them. But why so? Why they make War against the Devil's kingdom, against the Errors and Lusts of Men; their *Preaching* tends to *subdue these*; No wonder then, if Satan (the *Father of lies*, Joh. 8. 44. and

*Accuser of the Brethren*, Rev. 12. 10.) stir up wicked Persons to *defame*, *belie* and *injure* them as much as they dare. 2 Tim. 3. 12. *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer Persecution.* If *all godly Ones*, must be Persecuted more or less by the *Hands* or *Tongues* of the wicked; it's not strange tho' *godly Ministers* meet with a *double portion* of it.

5. *Ministers of Christ therefore had need to be well armed with Patience and Courage.* Our Lord Jesus *forewarn'd* His *Ministers* of their *difficulties and dangers*, that they might be *forearm'd*, Joh. 16. 1, 2. They should be *set for the defence of the Gospel*, (Phil. 1. 17.) If their true and faithful Doctrines are oppos'd and condemn'd, this should not daunt or discourage them; but like *Paul* and *Barnabas* they should rather *wax bold*, Acts 13. 44, 45. They should Indeavour after that temper of the holy Apostle *Paul* who when he knew, that *bonds and afflictions did abide him*, for the sake of the Gospel; could yet say, *None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto my self, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the Ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God*, Acts 20. 23, 24. Indeed the Ministers of the Gospel are Ingag'd in a Great and Weighty work, they are *Ambassadors of Christ* and should *pray Sinners to be reconciled to God*

2 Cor. 5. 20. This is a Matter of very great Weight, of vast Importance, to be *reconcil'd to God.* If they should die enemies to GOD, unreconcil'd to Him, they must then perish for ever; they must be kept out of Heaven, eternally banish'd from all that's good and comfortable: they must be sent with Gods *Curse into Everlasting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, Mat. 25 41. But if they do heartily Repent of their Sins, heartily turn from them and trust in Christ Jesus for Salvation; then GOD will accept them, pardon them, be at peace with them, bless and save them for ever. If they perish, their Misery will be Inconceivably great, and Eternal for duration. If they are Saved, then their Joy and Glory will be Inconceivably great, and also eternal in duration. Surely then, Ministers can't take too much pains for the good of Souls. They should even *Travail in birth till Christ be formed in them*, Gal. 4. 19. They should be ready to *spend and be spent* for the good of precious Immortal Souls, 2 *Cor.* 12. 14. They should not grudge their utmost Study, Pains and Labour in this matter. If the *Bodies* of of our Neighbours are dangerously *Sick* or *Wounded*, are we not willing to give our best *Advice* and *Assistance* to help and relieve them? But how much more precious are their *Souls*, than their *Bodies*? How greatly then should we be concern'd, for the welfare of their Immortal Spirits? While

we're labouring for the good of their Souls, surely small matters should not discourage us. If we are *oppos'd, revil'd, slander'd, abus'd many ways*; yet we should not give over Indeavouring their Spiritual welfare. We should arm our selves with *Patience* under, and *Courage* against, all the Oppositions we meet with in our work. Those who oppose and resist the Gospel for a while, may possibly be afterwards conquered by the Sovereign, Almighty Grace of GOD. 2 Tim. 2. 24, 25, 26. *The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all Men, apt to teach, patient. In meekness Instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledgement of the Truth. And that they may recover themselves out of the Snare of the Devil, who are taken Captive by him at his will.* Surely, Ministers should strive and pray, that they may have *Patience, Courage, Resolution* to do their utmost for the Saving of Souls, notwithstanding all the Opposition they may meet with in this work, either from Satan's Temptations or Mens Corruptions. 2 Tim. 2. 3. *Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good Souldier of Jesus Christ.* Phil. 1. 28. *And in nothing terrified by your Adversaries.* 2 Tim. 4. 5. *But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an Evangelist, make full proof of thy Ministry.*

6. I

6. *It's no wonder, tho' spreading the Gospel into Places that are destitute, meets with Difficulties and Oppositions.* A subtle, malicious Devil will do all he can, to stir up the *Ignorance, blind Zeal, Lust and Corruptions* of Men; to oppose the Spreading of the Gospel, to lay all possible blocks and hindrances in the way. 1 Thes. 2. 18. *We would have come to you (even I Paul) once and again, but Satan hindered us.* When *Paul* Preach'd at *Athens*, there the *Philosophers encountered* and oppos'd him: when at *Thessalonica*, there (as well as other Places) the *Jews* rais'd a tumult and uproar against him, *Act. ch.* 17. & 19. Nay a subtle Devil sometimes so Insinuates into *good Men*, so works on their remaining Ignorance and Weakness; as to make them *Oppose what's good.* Thus *Peter* once so oppos'd Christ, as that Christ said to him, *Get thee behind me Satan, thou art an offence unto me*, Mat. 16 22, 23. *Paul* and *Barnabas* (those eminent Preachers of the Gospel) once *contended so sharply*, as to *separate* from one another (*Act.* 15. 39.) This had an awful theatning aspect on the Gospel-Interest, tho' God over rul'd it for good. If Satan can do it, he'll make even *good Men differ and oppose one another*, that so he may hurt the Gospel Interest. He thinks to make his advantage, by their different apprehensions. What good work is there, that does not meet with Opposition? What great difficulties and Impe-

diments

diments did the *Jews* meet with, in *building the second Temple*, and in building the *Walls of Jernsalem*? Therefore we should not be Startled at, nor discourag'd by; those Difficulties and Oppositions which attend the Spreading of the Gospel.

7. *Those who oppose the spreading and efficacy of the Gospel, side in with the Devils Interest.* This is true of all those under the Gospel, who continue *Impenitent* and *unbelieving* in heart. And it's true of all those, who are against sending the Gospel into, or entertaining of it in, those dark Ignorant places which are destitute of it. Ministers are commanded, *Preach the Word, be Instant in Season, and out of Season; rebuke, reprove, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine*, 2 Tim. 4. 2. Consequently, it must needs be the *Duty of People* as they have opportunity, to hear the Gospel. *Hear and your Soul shall live*, Isa. 55. 3. The Divine Command is, Jam. 1. 21. *Lay apart all filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness; and receive with meekness the Ingrafted Word, which is able to save your Souls.* Indeed those who *want the Gospel*, should *seek* it, and *send* for it; they should *pray* as the *Man of Macedonia*, saying, *Come over and help us*, Act. 16. 9. Surely then, they should gladly *Receive*, *Hear*, and *Obey* it when it comes. But when the Gospel is sent, and Preach'd in a Place, and some *purposely decline to hear it*, and

discourage

discourage others from hearing it; herein they *plainly disobey Christ*, and side in with the Devil's Interest. When they give pretended *Reasons* and *Arguments*, against *Hearing*, *Entertaining* and *Setling the Gospel among them*; herein they are *pleading the cause of the Devil*, who would blind them to their own destruction. In *putting away Gods word from them, they judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life*, Acts 13, 46. Such Persons *fight against God*, (Acts 5. 39.) they challenge an unequal Match, for they provoke the *Almighty, Omnipotent* GOD to vengeance. How great is the folly, fool-hardness and ingratitude of such Sinners! *Do we provoke the Lord to Jealousie? Are we Stronger than he?* 1 Cor. 10. 24. *Who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?* Job 9. 4. Those who oppose the Gospel, act as Christ's enemies. When any are for *Keeping*, or *Warning*, the Ministers of Christ *out of Town*; or for *Starving* them out of Town, when they're unwilling to afford 'em such *Maintainance* as the Great GOD has *Ordain'd* for them (1 Cor. 9. 14.) I say, when they do thus, they oppose God and Christ, and side in with the Devil's Interest. Indeed *Civil Rulers* among a Professing People, should see to it, that *Gods Ministers* have a proper support and *Maintainance* afforded to them: *Civil Rulers* should Incourage the *faithful Ministers of Christ*. 2 Chron. 30. 22. *And Hezekiah* (he was *King of Judah*) spake

*spake comfortably to all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the Lord.* And was this all, did he only give them *Good Words?* Nay further, he took care for their *Maintainance.* 2 Chron. 31. 4. *Moreover he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem, to give the portion of the Priests, and Levites, that they might be incouraged in the way of the Lord.* Here was a godly King, *commanding Maintainace* for Gods Ministers. Yea when the Ministers of God were neglected, their *Maintainance withheld*, so that they were oblig'd to *fly to their Fields*, to mind some *Secular business* for a *Livelihood*; when so, what did *Nehemiah* that *godly Governour* do? Why says he, *Then contended I with the Rulers, and said; Why is the House of God forsaken?* And so a supply was then brought in for Gods Ministers, *Neh.* 13. 10, 11, 12. He contended with the *Rulers*, it seems the *Rulers* should have taken care, and should have obliged the People to support and maintain God's Ministers. These things were *written for our Learning*, Rom. 15. 4. Those who *abhor Idols*, yet *should not commit Sacriledge*, Rom. 2. 22. Civil Rulers *now* (as well as *of old*) should take care that People do their Duty in supporting God's Ministers; for such *Rulers* should submit to Christ, and promote His Interest, *Psal.* 2. 10——12. *Isai.* 49. 22, 23. And if any oppose *Rulers* in this Pious care, herein they *oppose God*, Tit. 3. 1. 1 Pet. 2.

3, 14. And let 'em consider what the Inspired Apostle says, Rom. 13.2. *Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the Ordinance of God: and they that resist, shall receive to themselves Damnation.* Well, let all take heed (as they'll answer it to GOD in the Great Day) that they don't oppose nor discourage the Gospel, that they don't disbelieve nor disobey it. If they do oppose and disobey it, wo be to them. If Sinners finally persevere in thus doing, they'll *Perish eternally.* For Christ will *Come in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with Everlasting destruction, from the presence of God, and from the glory of His Power,* 2 Thes. 1.7—9.

8. *It's a wonderful Instance of Christ's Power, that the Gospel is upheld in the World, since so much Opposition is made against it.* Christ has promis'd, *That the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against His Church,* Mat. 16. 18. And this promise never has fail'd, and never shall fail; for Christ has *all Power in Heaven and Earth,* and therefore will have a Church, will have His *Ministers Preaching* and *Baptizing,* and acting in His Name according to His Commission; and that *to the end of the World,* Mat. 28. 18——20. Christ is stronger than the strong Man armed; *All things are put under His Feet, He's head over all things to the Church,* Eph. 1.22

1. 20——22. Christ shows His *Power*, in preserving His *Little Flock* the Church, in the World; and in *Upholding the Gospel* tho' never so much oppos'd. Thus Christ has done, and thus He will do, in Spite of Earth and Hell, of Men and Devils. Those who *Rage* against Christ, do but *Imagine a vain thing*; when they *consult against Him*, He *Laughs at them and has them in Derision*; and can easily *Dash them to pieces as a Potter's vessel*, Psal. 2.

9. *We should highly prize and heartily Obey the Gospel.* Thus to do, will be profitable to us both in this World and the next. *Godliness hath the promise of the Life that is, and of that which is to come*, 1 Tim. 4. 8. *It shall go well with the Righteous, he shall eat the fruit of his doings*, Isai. 3. 10. *Christ became the Author of Eternal Salvation, to all that Obey Him*, Heb. 5. 9. Therefore let all who Read this Book, Obey Christ themselves; and do all they can to *Spread, Promote, Incourage* His holy *Gospel* in the World. 1 Cor. 15. 58. *Be stedfast unmovable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord. Forasmuch as ye know that your Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.*

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